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# history of the internet pt 1



paultristis

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“Behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.”

—Luke 17:10

“because the server is already connected, disconnection is impossible, there’s still a faint electric hum when the computer is unplugged, the server will not let you delete your account, prayers are heard even if god is rejected; & somehow: it still feels that no matter where i go, no body is connected.”

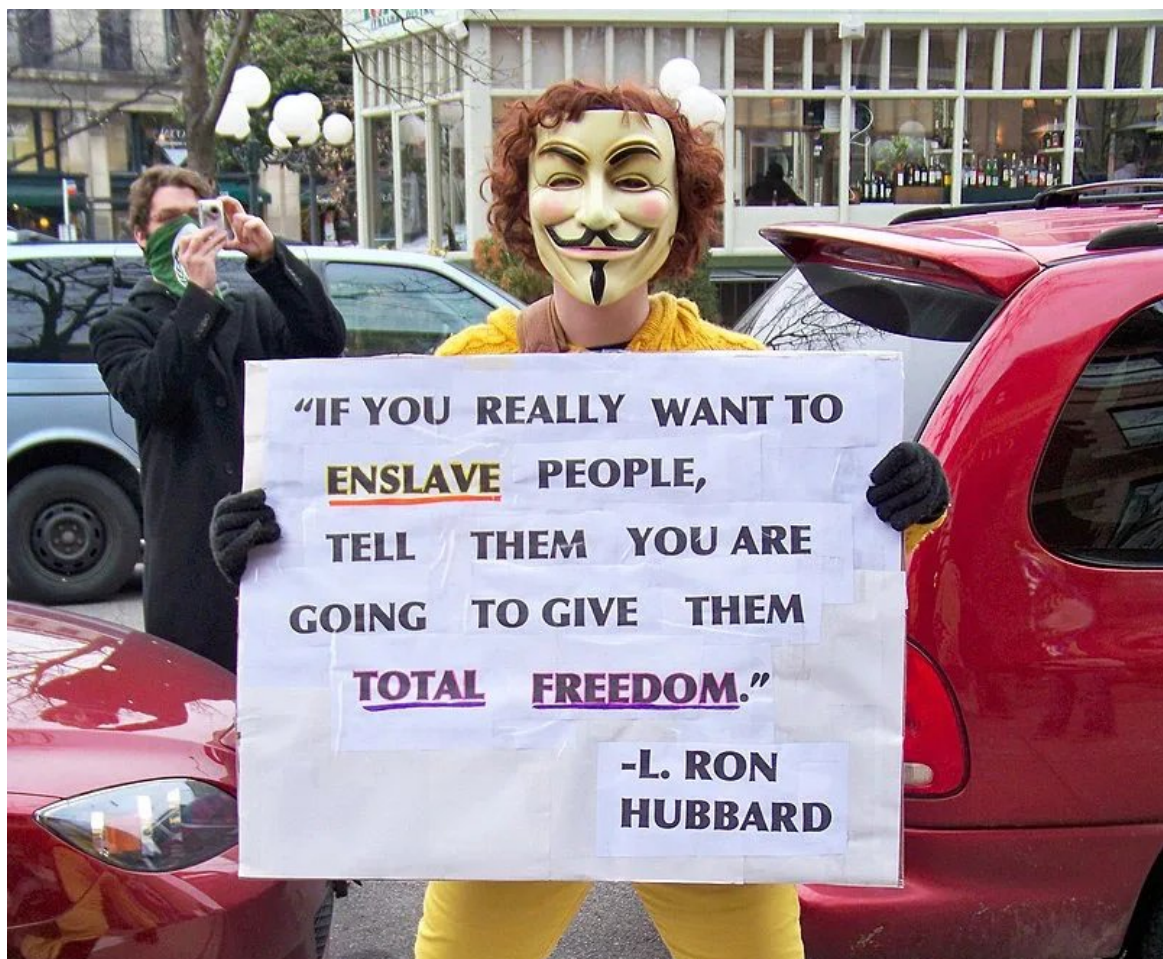
—[Mara Barl](#), June 1, 2022

Wherever two or three are gathered you can feel the presence of another if you pay attention. An invisible hand guiding the conversation. If you and me are together I know how you're feeling and you know how I'm feeling. At a party I make a chart of the vibe in my notebook and reference it like you would a candle chart. The patterns are even similar. The stocks are all traded by computers but they're trained to act like people do: steady goes, subtle fluctuations, the frenzied rise, the (stomach) drop. When the room is big it reacts to itself so fast and it can reach a point of ecstasy, but there's no telling when it might crash into misery. Like a crypto project, the vibe goes up and down so quickly and it's impossible to tell where the party ends and begins until it's all over.

We are all together in one big room now, even though it's not really together and it's not really one room. Were we always aware of this? The internet's founding ideologies—atheism, tech-humanism, libertarian politics—share a denial of group consciousness. Individuality was asserted through the attitude of the troll, the uniquely constructed identity and the denial of the communal experiences of religion, society and tradition. The first people online saw themselves as the only true individuals in a society of mindless non-actors. In binary opposition to offline reality, the early internet was on a mission to develop a utopian model for a society of independents. It was like America all over again—this time for real.

Yet this supposed individual culture was a powerful social organism. Trolls moved in hordes, idiosyncratic identities were not constructed alone as much as developed abruptly together by a few adherents, and the communal experience denied in reality flowered online through cults, alternative politics and reactionary lifestyle-projects. Flame wars, memes, and other mass events began not long after computers were connected together. Theosophist terms such as “tulpa” and “egregore”, always found in occult forums, were first popularized online during the 2009 Slenderman decentralized alternative reality game. Slenderman—and its contemporary, Anonymous—brought a related idea to the public eye: thought-form. (If enough people describe something, the collective imagining can make that thing happen in reality.)

Known as “meme magic”, this idea gained further notoriety in 2014 during the Ebola epidemic and Gamergate, and peaked with the 2016 Trump presidential campaign, which was seen by many at the time as the first successful example of the internet “breaking” reality. Fundamental to the internet’s self-conception as an independent force, meme magic was closely related to what the CCRU had called hyperstition, though the CCRU inverted the direction of causality: “from the point of view of the hyperstitional object, human intelligences are mere incubators through which intrusions are directed against the order of historical time.”





Anonymous protester, 2009

The conception of the internet as a self-liberating force emerged out of the tension between the discrete online self (the troll, god of a universe of one) and the **networked** real self (a puppet, a non playable character). After 2016, what was left of the old internet began to be preoccupied with “leaving”, as it became more aware of the suicidal nature of independent action. Kaczynski and Mishima—both popular online during the “blackpilled” late 2010s—each understood that leaving (acting independently of) society was suicidal yet chose to act anyway. Kaczynski, despite knowing that humanity was imprisoned by the systems it created, insisted that independent action was possible—to leave or even turn the ship around. Mishima, equally preoccupied with the possibility of action, wrote characters, often misunderstood and pitiful, who acted in the name of “true beauty”. Both realizing that they were already dead, Mishima and Kaczynski each committed suicide as the only means to accomplish an independent act.

In the Angelicist 2020s, the suicidal actor valorized immediately preceding the pandemic is extinct. Today’s domestic terrorist figure is “groomed”, controlled by unspoken externalities, another NPC. Since the pandemic, many people online speak of *all* mass events as cointelpro operations, reversing the narrative of the virtuous swarm into that of a mob influenced and controlled by the system it appears to oppose. Many once-optimistic mass events now seem naive. Project Chanology (2009), a decentralized movement concerned with freeing information, became a prototype for cancellation movements in the 2010s. The 2014 Ebola episode, symbolic of an online attack on exterior reality, prototyped the systematic restatement of that reality during COVID. After the January 6, 2021 cancellation of both Trump and the online phenomena which helped launch him into power, the inverted causality of Land’s hyperstition seems complete, while the possibility of

breaking with the order of historical time is utterly null.

“If the only way to avoid extinction is by opting out, then there is no difference between angelicism01 and ecofash withdrawal. But isn't it a risk that we grasp so hard to filter every ongoing internet event through the lens of extinction that we fail to see the possibility of non-extinction on or outside the internet, the beautiful offline still there?...

The internet fails to exist. You should leave it. Leave society. Leave the internet. Many smiles cover your heart. Fade into it. Fade into absolute intelligence. Leave the internet before it is too late.”

—Angelicism01, May 29, 2022

Did you feel it? The internet ended, but no matter how much you want to leave, you can't. You can't log off for the same reason you can't leave society. The internet has died because the world is the internet. You'll never log off, the internet is over.



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